

Adult Literacy Contact Centre NEWSLETTER



February 1994

Volume 7, Number 2

A project of the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C.

Vision and Literacy: There's a Clear Connection

The obvious but often overlooked connection between good vision skills and good reading skills is the theme chosen for the 1994 Vision Awareness Week, March 6 - 12, of the Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO) and its provincial affiliates.

Instituted by the CAO in the early 1950's, Vision Awareness Week (VAW) is proclaimed every March by the Prime Minister, the provincial premiers, and many city mayors and municipal officials across the country. Its goal is to raise public awareness of the importance of professional eye and vision care, "to conserve, protect and improve vision throughout one's lifetime."

The honorary chairman of the 1994 VAW campaign is Peter Gzowski, CBC radio broadcaster, author and literacy advocate.

As part of its VAW campaign, the B.C. Association of Optometrists (BCAO) will mail out information kits to the media, the literacy field, public school teachers, libraries and public health units.

According to the CAO, most vision problems fall into two categories: the obvious ones, which can

be detected by a standard eye chart test, and the not-so-obvious ones, which deal with eye-hand coordination, perceptual, or nearpoint focusing problems. It is the latter category that often inhibits a person's ability to read and learn. Acuity (or the clarity of vision at near and far) is only one of eight different vision skills required for good vision.

The CAO believes that teachers are in the best position to help identify students with undetected vision problems that may interfere with learning.

In 1990, U.S. optometrist Dr. A. P. Thau conducted a vision screening to determine if adults enrolled in the New York City Development Agency literacy programs might have undetected vision problems that were interfering with their success in the program. Dr. Thau found that 66% of the 117 students examined failed one or more parts of the screening.

A similar study was conducted in Virginia in 1992, by Drs. J. L. Zaba and R. A. Johnson, with the Tidewater Literacy Council. Of the 54 literacy students who took the tests, 74% failed the visual screening and were referred for

continued on page 2

"Vision" from page 1

complete optometric examination. Of this group, 44% failed at least two subtests. According to Dr. Zaba, these results substantiate "the importance of optometrists developing a close working relationship with their local literacy groups."

As part of VAW, a television program called, "Life is Worth Seeing," co-produced by the BCAA and the Knowledge Network will air on channel 5 on March 6 at 11:00 a.m. and March 12 at 3:00 p.m. The program, made in 1987, "describes good eye health and vision care from cradle to grave."

During VAW, optometrists across the province will be available to address interested groups on all topics related to vision.

For more information on Vision Awareness Week, contact:

British Columbia Association of
Optometrists
125 - 10451 Shellbridge Way
Richmond, B.C.
V6X 2W8
Phone: 270-9909
Fax: 270-4950 □



B.C. Association of Optometrists

Literacy Funding to Continue

Federal funding for literacy initiatives in Canada will continue under the new Liberal government.

The announcement of continued funding was made in the speech from the throne delivered by Governor-General Ramon Hnatyshyn on January 18, 1994.

The announcement was: "Job creation and sustained economic growth require an investment in people....The Government will propose measures to improve job training as well as the literacy skills of Canadians. Funding for the National Literacy Program will be restored to its original level."

The National Literacy Program, established in 1988 by the previous Conservative government, was originally a \$110 million, five-year commitment to support a variety of literacy initiatives. The Program is administered by the National Literacy Secretariat (now part of the new department of Human Resources and Labour Canada under Minister Lloyd Axworthy).

In B.C., grants for adult literacy projects have been cost-shared between the National Literacy Secretariat and the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour

(previously the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology).

In 1993/94, the cost-shared agreement provided funding in the amount of \$1.2 million for a total of 35 projects in B.C. □

Learn About Learning Disabilities in March

The Learning Disabilities Association of B.C., Vancouver Chapter (LDAV) will join forces with the Adult Learning Disabilities Association (ALDA) and other agencies to promote public awareness of LD with a display at the Vancouver Public Library Central Branch (750 Burrard Street) March 6 - 12.

The week-long display will feature information on learning disabilities, such as brochures, posters, and a display of books on the subject available from the library.

According to the LDAV, "LD is a lifelong disorder which affects the manner in which individuals with normal or above-average intelligence select, retain and express information. Incoming and outgoing information may become scrambled as it travels between the senses and the brain." The association says

continued on page 3

"Learn" from page 2

more than 3.5 million
Canadians have LD.

The LDAH "provides an
information and referral service,
and direct programs for
individuals with learning
disabilities, families,
professionals and agencies."

For more information, contact:

Emese Azucs, Resource
Coordinator
Learning Disabilities Association of
B.C. - Vancouver Chapter
909 - 750 West Broadway
Vancouver, B.C.
V5Z 1H1
Phone: 873-8139
Fax: 873-8140

ALDA is a non-profit public
awareness, referral and
counselling service that
provides help for adults with
learning disabilities. The
Vancouver-based agency is
currently conducting a
feasibility study to open an
additional office in the
Okanagan.

Currently, ALDA has three
grants of \$100 each available
for book purchases to "LD,
adult, part-time students in
financial need."

For more information, contact:

Grace Piontkovsky, Executive
Director
Adult Learning Disabilities
Association
1322 - 510 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V6B 1L8
Phone: 683-5554
Fax: 683-2380 ☐

ASE Conference Focuses on Programs and Services

Registration is still open for the
annual general meeting and
conference of the Adult Special
Education (ASE) Network of
B.C.

The conference, called "In
Focus - In Depth: A Forum on
Postsecondary Program and
Service Issues," will be held
February 24 - 25, 1994 at the
Four Seasons Hotel in
Vancouver. The event will
feature a number of workshops
of interest to special needs
educators.

The keynote speaker at the
conference will be Ontario MPP
and advocate for the deaf, Garry
Malkowski, who is Canada's
first hearing-impaired member
of a provincial Parliament.

Three examples of workshop
topics are:

❖ *Current State of the Art of Learning Disabilities.*

Instructor: Jan Schiell,
Assessment Specialist,
Achievement Resource Centre,
Capilano College. "Many
aspects of the learning-disabled
adult, including academic
achievement, social-
interpersonal skills,
employment attainments,
psychological-emotional

continued on page 4

THANK YOU, DONORS!

The Adult Literacy Contact
Centre acknowledges with
gratitude the recent
donations we have received
from:

**the employees of
Alexander Holburn
Beaudin & Lang
(through the United Way)**

Mr. Olgeir Arnason

**Maria R. Hugl, M.D.
(in memory of Juanita Friry)**

**Maria Wellisch and
Associates**

Adult Literacy Contact Centre Newsletter

622 - 510 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1L8
1-800-663-1293 Toll-free in B.C.
684-0624 Lower Mainland
684-8520 Fax

The Adult Literacy Contact
Centre is a project of the Adult
Basic Education Association of
B.C. and is jointly funded by the
Ministry of Skills, Training and
Labour; and the National
Literacy Secretariat.

The Centre welcomes receiving
your literacy news by phone, fax
or mail. We reserve the right to
edit written submissions for the
newsletter.

The newsletter is published
monthly (except as noted). It is
available free of charge to any
individual or agency upon
request.



"Special Education" from page 3

problems and independent living skills will be studied in detail."

❖ *Independence in the Writing Process.* Instructor: Constance McAvoy, Special Educational Technology B.C. A workshop to "focus on issues and strategies in assisting students with learning disabilities to become independent writers through the use of technology."

❖ *Developing Effective Vocational Partnerships for Special Populations: The Challenge of Partnerships and Alliances.* A forum to discuss existing partnerships with the food and service industries and trade unions; and a session to address how community colleges can link with business and industry. (Speakers to be confirmed.)

The conference is open to all. Registration will be available at the door.

For further information, contact:

Kathy Moscrip, Conference Coordinator
ASE Forum '94
886 Nicolum Court
North Vancouver, B.C.
V7H 2R9
Phone: 929-3289
Fax: 929-8066 ☐

Victoria is Site for 1994 ABEABC Conference

A full slate of workshops and two keynote speakers have been announced for the 1994 annual general meeting and conference of the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C. (ABEABC).

The conference -- centred on the theme of "Building Community Partnerships" -- takes place at the Ocean Pointe Resort in Victoria, April 20 - 23, 1994.

The conference is hosted by Camosun College, the Victoria READ Society, the Victoria Native Friendship Centre, Project Literacy Victoria, and others.

Among the 27 workshops are:

❖ *Looking to the Future Together.* With Thomas Quigley, Librarian, Languages and Literature Division, Vancouver Public Library; and Ellen Szita, the Victoria woman whose struggles as a single mother with low literacy skills were documented in *Ellen's Story*, a Canadian-made film, which first aired on national TV in April 1992. "Come hear and react to a learner's and a librarian's visions."

❖ *Reading the Museum.* This workshop will describe a year-long project between Malaspina University College (Duncan) adult basic education students and the B.C. Forestry Museum in Duncan. The project involved student input in revising the museum's guide book and signage, and an oral history collection based on interviews with local loggers. Malaspina ABE instructors Evelyn Battell and Kate Nonesuch will conduct the workshop, with two students from the project.

❖ *Humour in the Workplace, or How to Annoy Your Co-worker.* With Denise Chow, instructor, and Diane Kirby, facilitator, Sooke School District. "A light-hearted presentation on how humour is good for us and some strategies for putting fun into our workplace."

❖ *Feminist Literacy Workers Network (FLWN).* With Sally Gellard, Community Adult Literacy and Learning Society (CALLS), Courtenay; and Evelyn Battell. FLWN is "a national voice for women who consider themselves feminist and want to make feminism part of their literacy work." Participants will "discuss the issues and get the latest news on literacy work with, for and by women."

The keynote speakers at the conference are:

continued on page 5

Legal Services Project Funding

The Legal Services Society of B.C. has 1994/95 project funding available to assist B.C. community groups to develop public legal education projects.

The Community Program, of the society's Communications and Education Services Department, will provide grants of up to \$4,000 to groups that, "help explain the law or the legal system to their members or to the public."

Some examples of projects funded in the past include: production of pamphlets on welfare rights, family law, and community legal resources; workshops on legal matters; and training sessions for volunteers in family and administrative law.

The society is especially interested in proposals for projects "aimed at groups who have difficulty gaining access to the legal system (single mothers, newcomers, refugees, people with disabilities)."

The deadline for applications is March 15, 1994.

For more information, contact:

Legal Services Society of B.C.
Suite 300, Box 3
1140 West Pender Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V6E 4G1
Phone: 660-4600
Fax: 660-4420 ☐

REMINDER

Groups applying for 1994/95 B.C. literacy cost-shared project funding are reminded that the deadline for this year's applications is fast approaching.

Mary Waddington, Coordinator, Literacy and ABE programs, Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour, says, "The firm deadline is **February 25, 1994.**

Applications must be received in hard copy with original signatures."

Project applications must be submitted through a community college to the National Literacy Secretariat and the Ministry.

For further information, contact:

Patty Bossort
Cost-Shared Projects
Consultant
4280 Windsor Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V5V 4P4
Phone: 876-3780
Fax: 876-6780

or:

Mary Waddington, Coordinator
Literacy and ABE Programs
Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour
2nd Floor - 838 Fort Street
Victoria, B.C.
V8V 1X4
Phone: 387-6174
Fax: 356-8851 ☐

Attention: All Volunteer Tutors

B.C.'s volunteer literacy tutors are encouraged to stand up and be counted during the CBC Television and the Lower Mainland Volunteer Centres' third annual Volunteer Day on CBC TV March 17, 1994.

The broadcast, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., will be hosted by CBC TV news anchor Kevin Evans. The event is a celebration of "the idea of volunteers." Volunteers throughout B.C. will be asked

to call in to the show to report the number of hours they currently contribute, and the number of hours they wish to pledge.

The event will also showcase some of the Volunteer Centres' member agencies.

For further information on the broadcast, contact:

Stephanie Boggan
Agency Services Coordinator
Volunteer Vancouver
301 - 3102 Main Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V5T 3G7
Phone: 875-9144
Fax: 875-0710 ☐

"Victoria" from page 4

♦ John Walsh, Associate Professor, School of Hotel and Food Administration, University of Guelph. Walsh is currently in B.C. as an advisor on apprenticeship, vocational and technical education with the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour.

♦ Pauline Waterfall, consultant, community organizer, and administrator with Heiltsuk College, Bella Bella, B.C. Her theme is "building community partnerships within programs using a classroom model of self-government that fosters self-reliance, equality, mutual responsibility and effective communication."

The early registration deadline for the conference is March 20, 1994.

For further information, contact:

Helen Thomas
ABEABC Conference Committee
c/o Victoria READ Society
720 Linden Avenue
Victoria, B.C.
V8V 4G7
Phone: 388-7225
Fax: 386-8330

or:

Carol Duyf
ABEABC Conference Committee
c/o Victoria Native Friendship Centre
3rd Floor - 531 Yates Street
Victoria, B.C.
V8W 1K7
Phone: 384-3211
Fax: 384-1586 □

New Publication

The Regional Professional Development and Needs Assessment Project Report

This report documents the results of a project that brought literacy and adult basic education practitioners together for a series of professional development workshops throughout B.C. last year.

The comprehensive report was compiled by Project Coordinator Audrey M. Thomas for the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C. (ABEABC), which sponsored the 1992/93 B.C. literacy cost-shared project.

According to Thomas, the project evolved because, "Many people working in adult basic education (ABE) do so on a variety of contracts, many of which are short-lived. It is also a field which attracts many newcomers, with little or no previous experience in ABE."

The first phase of the project involved a needs assessment to determine the professional development interests of B.C. practitioners. Approximately 50% of the 550 questionnaires distributed to the field were returned. One question asked respondents to indicate their level of interest in 26 possible workshop topics. The top three choices were: Learner Diagnosis and Assessment; Creating Learning Materials; and Strategies for Teaching

People with Learning Difficulties.

The aim of the project "was to try to make professional development more accessible," by presenting workshops in different regions of the province. Seven workshops were held in Prince George, Terrace, Kamloops, Dawson Creek, Vancouver, Cranbrook, and Nanaimo.

Thomas reports that in two regions -- North Central and East Kootenays -- "participants were most appreciative of the effort to bring in quality PD," and that, in the North West and North East, "the anticipated numbers did not materialize, but local people felt that the attendance was good and...appreciated the initiative."

The report is available from:

Rhoda Rizkalla, Administrative Coordinator
Adult Basic Education Association of B.C.
926 - 510 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V6B 1L8
Phone: 685-9448
Fax: 685-9772 □

ABEABC Change of Address

As you can see above, the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C. has relocated to new office space. The move was effective February 1, 1994.

Please note their new address, phone, and fax.